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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 544  
By Crutchfield

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize LaVell Edwards, retired coach of Brigham Young University.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those educators who, in their years of work, performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, LaVell Edwards is one such estimable person who served with probity for twenty-eight years as head football coach at Brigham Young University, leading the program to the pinnacle of the college game; and

WHEREAS, this legendary sportsman was born on October 11, 1930, just five miles from the campus where he would spend most of his professional life; one of fourteen children, he learned from his parents the core values of honesty, diligence, determination, loyalty, and faith that would precipitate his remarkable success; and

WHEREAS, as early as eight years of age, he showed a deep love for football and coaching, as he often stopped at Lincoln High School to watch Coach Sanky Dixon's practices;

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when he was old enough to play, he starred at Lincoln, playing center and linebacker, earning All-State recognition, and winning a state championship; and

WHEREAS, the talented young athlete continued his playing career at Utah State University; while an Aggie, he learned the intricacies of the game from three head coaches and prepared for the time when he would begin calling plays instead of executing them; and

WHEREAS, following his graduation and a two-year stint as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the United States Army, he began his career as Head Coach at Granite High School; he experienced limited success at the school, but he brought respectability to the program and earned a solid reputation among his peers for his leadership and knowledge of the game; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, BYU Head Coach Hal Mitchell hired Coach Edwards as a prep mentor and defensive line coach; over the next few years, he became one of the staff's most trusted coaches and worked his way up to the defensive coordinator position under Tom Hudspeth; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, LaVell Edwards was selected to lead the Brigham Young University Cougars as Head Coach; his selection would soon prove to have been the most pivotal decision in program history; and

WHEREAS, when Coach Edwards took the helm, the football team's all-time record was 173-232-23; when he left to take a well-deserved retirement after the 2000 season, the record stood at 430-333-26; and

WHEREAS, at the time of his retirement, Coach Edwards owned the third most wins of any active coach and the third highest winning percentage of any active coach with more than 150 wins; he occupied the number 6 position on the all-time wins list, just ahead of Nebraska legend Tom Osborne; and

WHEREAS, as he compiled such a remarkable record, he completed numerous seasons of tremendous success; and

WHEREAS, thirteen times, the Cougars finished a season ranked in the top 25, including four top 10 finishes; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, BYU won twenty conference titles and went to twenty-two bowl games; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, the Cougars completed a season that will never be forgotten by any of their fans; they compiled a perfect 13-0 record and defeated the University of Michigan in the Holiday Bowl to claim the National Championship; and

WHEREAS, the program's surprisingly swift ascent to the top of the college game was triggered by the coaching acumen of LaVell Edwards; he earned a reputation among his peers as an innovator and as the nation's foremost passing game guru; and

WHEREAS, under his tutelage, Cougar quarterbacks passed more than 11,000 times, connecting for 103,562 yards and 646 touchdowns; four of his quarterbacks have received the Davey O'Brien Award as the nation's best at their position, and Ty Detmer won the Heisman Trophy; and

WHEREAS, not only quarterbacks thrived under Coach Edwards; his program produced 33 All-Americans, 177 All-WAC players, 11 WAC Players of the Year, 22 Academic All-Americans, 152 members of the All-WAC Academic Team, and two Outland Trophy winners, Jason Buck and Mohammed Elewenibi; and

WHEREAS, LaVell Edwards possesses an unsurpassed knowledge of the game of football, and he earned the respect and admiration of players, coaches, and fans throughout the game; and

WHEREAS, the countless honors he has earned include 1984 National Coach of the Year, 1979 Bobby Dodd National Coach of the Year, seven WAC Coach of the Year honors, eight NCAA District 8 Coach of the Year honors, and the Dale Rex Memorial Award; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, he was named to the Utah Sports Hall of Fame and the Utah State All-Century Team, and he was named Utah's Coach of the Century in 1996; and

WHEREAS, most importantly, this estimable coach was instrumental in the overall development of many young men; the vast majority of his players have translated the work ethic, determination, and character they cultivated under Coach Edwards' direction into success in later life and have become leaders in their respective fields; and

WHEREAS, possibly the most widely recognized and respected man in Provo, LaVell Edwards took the BYU football program to a level that was previously unimaginable; in all of his endeavors, he has behaved with the utmost dignity and character and maintained a deep love of and faith in his Lord, and he has always encouraged his players and friends to do the same; and

WHEREAS, the 65,000-seat Cougar Stadium stands as a monument to his coaching accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Coach Edwards holds a singular position in the history of collegiate athletics; his departure from the sidelines has left a void that is not easily filled; and

WHEREAS, Coach Edwards exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that is characteristic of a true American; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Coach Edwards demonstrated a remarkable ability to motivate his student athletes to reach their potential, and his greatest and most enduring legacy is the success of the young men who matured under his tutelage; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor and commend LaVell Edwards, retired Coach of the Brigham Young University Cougars, for his remarkable success on the gridiron and express our deepest admiration for his unquestionable character.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we offer our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.